

**Hamilton Development Corporation**  
**November 12, 2014**

The Hamilton Development Corporation met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2014 with Brian Stein (arrived at 7:40 a.m.), Rick Mitchell, Anthony Nickas, Dave Carey, Bill Gisness present. Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena also present.

**Payment of bills**

Anthony Nickas read details of warrant totaling \$2,369.85 for various vendors including: Salem Five, Landcare, Harborlight, and Jane Dooley. Finance Director Deborah Nippes-Mena had approved these expenses that are awaiting HDC approval. Rick Mitchell moved for the HDC to approve the warrant as presented. David Carey seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Discussion ensued about report that Nippes-Mena will receive this week regarding the variability in the Meals Tax revenue where it is normally flat with a \$11,000 dip which could be an anomaly. Discussion addressed possibility of a lack of reporting and DOR investigation. Also mentioned was how Carey will be contacting Kathryn about a price for assisting HDC with policies and procedures.

**Recap of fall planning session for the Hamilton/Wenham Village held November 8**

There were 30 attendees including HDC representatives (and one Wenham person) at the session and a contact list was created which can be used for next planning meeting. Hamilton and Wenham have an adjoining commercial district so Wenham has been notified of sessions.

Discussion ensued about how professional the presentation and images were at the meeting and that work could be done to articulate concepts since confusion and negative undercurrent occurred at meeting (i.e., possibility of affordable housing or high-rise building). HDC is interested in pedestrian friendly downtown with lights, planters, benches, brick sidewalks amongst coffee shop, bakery, book shop, antique store, and newspaper store. It was noted that attendees are getting up to speed on the concept of downtown development and instinct has been for them to voice what they would not like in a downtown prior to what they would like. The HDC needs to identify what is doable and acceptable.

Discussion addressed how some HDC members were surprised that the attendees expressed resistance to mixed use. Also that terms such as mixed use, roof heights, and design standards should be defined by HDC for the group. There was an interactive discussion at the meeting and some attendees told HDC that it was productive. Carey offered to type up notes that Bill Gisness took at the meeting to determine action items. Also noted was a percentage of Hamilton residents whose children are adults and they want to downsize from single family houses and continue to live in Town but there are no downsize housing options (i.e., condominium).

Discussion was on how school population is going down and this decline in school age children is occurring across the North Shore. The HDC representatives will review HWRSD Master Plan on the school district's website.

The Corporation discussed how it was positive that many attendees spoke at recent planning session. Next round the HDC will ask specific structured questions for attendees to answer so the HDC can hear what people want at planning sessions. Also, that the HDC has interest in establishing housing stock other than single family homes that is more affordable (i.e., \$300,000 condominium) rather than Section 8 or below market rate housing. Focus should be on uses and height to be established for downtown area.

Discussion ensued about how there are some Town residents who want no change in the downtown, and that people expressed interest in 25' height versus 35' height that is currently allowed. Also mentioned was that design standards should be addressed in current zoning by-law. HDC members are soliciting as many viewpoints as possible to make a good decision for the Town and suggested that attendees at today's meeting communicate this standpoint with resident groups. One attendee mentioned that some residents are fearful that development will result in Hamilton's downtown resembling Rantoul Street in Beverly. So the HDC discussed how it could convey to residents the intent to create an overlay district that would be controlled by the Planning Board so design guidelines and special permit process will control what occurs in the business district. As part of this public process, any project could be turned down. Also mentioned was dynamic that can occur on Planning Board based on the positions of elected members.

Discussion addressed how Cumberland Farms project was an allowed use that was influenced by Planning Board recommendation and Zoning Board of Appeals site plan approval. The two Town boards were able to get the final project to have fewer fuel pumps, smaller canopy size, change the look of building, and use recommended

materials. Also mentioned was how a developer can do a project if it meets basic requirements of site plan review while with a special permit the Town can say that a project presented by a developer is not an appropriate use. Discussion ensued about HDC making recommendations about zoning by-law changes relative to uses.

The HDC discussed how it has to do a better job of communicating what its mission is to foster economic development to ease tax burden town wide, and what area the Corporation is focusing on. The HDC heard loud and clear from the planning session that the maximum allowed height should come down (i.e., 35' to 25') and that this could be a change to the zoning by-law. Additionally, that meeting attendees were not receptive to mixed use with housing in the same structure as retail. The HDC will illustrate what that mixed use could look like and define the benefits relative to the concerns expressed about apartments on the second floor and affordable housing.

Discussion ensued about housing at Firehouse Place as part of Chapter 40B and above Community Package Store as part of a land swap and purchaser of the land had to provide parking. Several business owners have approached HDC inquiring about putting an apartment above an existing business and were told that use is not currently allowed and they referenced the package store. The intent would be to allow housing above to help support the business. Discussion was about the economics of combining residential with commercial relative to what type of housing could be supported including demographic that would come to the village and what type of tax revenue would result. Also, the importance of focusing on the positive in these planning meetings, and numbers (i.e., \$200,000 units) and housing types provided were information that could be used by ULI. Also mentioned was that the market is going to drive the type of housing that will succeed in the village with HDC creating a framework for Hamilton to create the type of neighborhood that the Town wants. It was noted that one project downtown is not going to solve the Town's tax revenue problem.

Discussion also addressed when any development is proposed outside of Hamilton's downtown huge resistance is expressed about the possibility of the character of Town changing, sentiment of not in my backyard, it is consuming open space, and suggestion is for development downtown. The HDC is trying to balance what occurs in Hamilton within its control since it is not a municipal government entity.

### **Renting commercial space at former shoe repair shop on Willow Street**

The HDC is going to rent the remaining commercial space at its Willow Street property to a plumber for office use and storage for \$700 a month. The McRae family is also

going to continue paying rent to the HDC for the Willow Street house until they get all of their belongings out. The house is in good shape including heating and electrical systems so the HDC should be able to rent it as is.

Next steps are for the HDC to meet on November 19 to prepare for its next planning session. The meeting adjourned at 8:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk